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A revised English curriculum, based upon different kinds of literary criticism, is counseled in this two-part paper. Part 1 identifies four kinds of criticism--formalist, synoptic, extrinsic, and stylistic. A conventional English Curriculum is briefly outlined. Curricular theories are discussed and positive and negative attempts to define literature are made. A case is made for basing the curriculum on criticism. Part 2 advances four postulates--the communication of knowledge about literature, a theory of relations between criticism and literature, acceptance of the literary work as the isolated atom to receive critical attention, and curriculum order derived from a theory of the learning process. Considerable attention is devoted to an outline of a four-year program based on these postulates. The program sequence is formalist (freshman year), synoptic (sophomore), analogical and generic (junior), and synthesizing (senior). (AF)

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Criticism and the Curriculum

Part I

PAUL SMITH

I SUGGEST THAT WE APPROACH the last of the three matters of this conference, criticism and the curriculum, warned by I. A. Richards' remark: "Every great persistent error is perhaps a mode of escape from worse errors."[1] Whatever uneasy state of affairs exists between criticism and the curriculum, no one here would deny that things have been and could be again a good deal worse. Yet, however grievous the errors we may be avoiding with the great and persistent curricula in which we work, no one who has worked there for long can honestly argue that things could not be better than they are. Too much of the grandeur and the promised longevity of our curricula is an unsolicited gift from a culture that is at once superstitious and pragmatic, conceiving of literature as an ornament to morality and language as a rhetoric for economic success. We have all seen the strings tied to that gift; still our curricula are often distorted and disoriented by the popular forces holding those strings. If language and literature are worth anything, that worth will be discovered in a free curriculum that takes its shape and meaning from the free inquiry of its informing discipline, which for literature is criticism.

The conventional curriculum in English and, until recently, the revisions that have been worked upon it have been rather despairing attempts to make the best of a bad job—and for two reasons, at least. First: that we have made the *best* and not the worst of a bad job, that there have been small successes here and there, is the consequence of some of the contemporary critical methods which have irrigated our curricula through the ordinary, if turbid, channels of publication or have shifted slightly the course of the mainstream of graduate education. At best this is a piecemeal and nearly accidental procedure which has changed the parts of the curriculum without significantly changing the whole. Second: even if this is our best, it is the best of *only* a bad job. Only in the last ten years and particularly in the last five, has there been any real or authoritative interest in curricular revision. Certainly there has always been some concern, and often a heated concern, with courses; but where there has been any interest in larger curricular matters it has been, oddly enough, extracurricular. Courses are often created and abolished in the academic counterpart of the spoils system; departmental offerings reflect the fluctuations of the MLA market as well as the inertial force of a variety of traditions; curricular ideals derive from that cyclical process in which graduate students are condensed into instructors in order that they may evaporate their students into graduate schools. Given this variety of forces at work upon college curricula in English, we can understand (although surely not approve) the desperate but naive notion that one simply hires what is known in professional circles as "good men" and turns them

[1] *Interpretation in Teaching* (London, 1937), p. 6. These two papers are the result of a joint effort; each of us contributed to and criticised the other's work. We wish to acknowledge our general debt to Northrop Frye, particularly his *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), and to James Wheatley (Wesleyan) for his suggestions and comments.

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loose to teach what they will. This version of the "cult of personality," like many other justifications of a weak curricular hand, may be dignified by the bluffing term pluralism, but when the cards are down it looks more like anarchy.

Whatever the cause, the conventional English curriculum follows a rather simple and regular pattern. After the freshman course there are two or three surveys (British, American, perhaps World literature); a variety of period courses covering centuries or half-centuries and organized about a movement (Romanticism) or a dominant figure (The Age of Johnson); a group of courses in "major" figures (Chaucer, Milton, Shakespeare); the traditional genre courses (Fiction, Poetry, Drama); and a senior seminar, the sub-species of which are innumerable. Beyond this lies a large etcetera group of courses in linguistics, criticism, composition, creative writing, public speaking, history of ideas (usually a humanities course), and a few interdepartmental offerings.

Now whether a curriculum derives from a conditioned reflex or from "the best that has been thought and said," it inevitably suggests a set of assumptions about the nature of literature, criticism, and pedagogy, and it ultimately implies something about the presumed relationship between our discipline and others. But it is hard to imagine any gathering of the courses just described suggesting anything other than an incoherent, eclectic, or contradictory theory of literary study. If any one principle looms over such gatherings, it is likely to be derived from a conception of criticism which places literature in a context of cultural history, biography, or moral philosophy, where true criticism waits upon the elaboration of literary and extraliterary "influences," notes on a writer's life, or some current evaluative doxology. And unless we take the position that a curriculum is a curriculum the way a pudding is a pudding (to borrow from Henry James's commentary on another uncritical position), our immediate order of business is to examine our critical assumptions and to revise and reorient them in some consistent and coherent system. Moreover, that system and the curriculum founded on it should articulate the major kinds of critical activity. The curriculum we would devise is based on four kinds which our reading of recent criticism has isolated: formalist criticism, in which we include the New Critics and those of the Chicago school; synoptic criticism, by which we mean that "systematic" criticism which takes the whole order of the modes and mythoi in literature as its province (Northrop Frye's work is our model here); extrinsic criticism, in which we include interdisciplinary studies which combine the activities of criticism and history, psychology, sociology, etc. (varieties of this sort appear in our curriculum incorporated under the term "analogical" criticism); and finally, stylistic criticism, a relatively new critical mode which, I think, may become in a radically extended form the unifying discipline of all criticism.

This is a large order, but it is not an impossible one. The area is not unexplored and parts of it are in a state of sophisticated development. Moreover, we are all familiar enough with such undertakings not to expect easy answers or that the first one will be right. J. L. Austin began his essay on "Truth" by noting that when Pontius Pilate would not stay for an answer to his infamous question, he was "in advance of his time." The analogy with Pilate may not be a happy one, but we too have the business of a province to attend to and may with more justice than Pilate be skeptical of final answers.

It is probably true that our negative decisions about literature (what it is not)

have as much informing effect upon a curriculum as our positive decisions (what literature is). To avoid a hopeless tautology, literature is not simply all that is literature; it is neither all nor the best of what is written in that unphilosophical category we term "imaginative" or "creative." Literature, like language, reflects a recurrent order, and just as no grammarian would describe a language with an infinite list of possible sentences, so we would not describe literature with a list of all possible literary works. The concern of criticism, like that of linguistics, is with the grammar of its object, with the underlying system of regularities which permits the generation of an infinite number and variety of literary structures. Some disruptive implications follow from this. Such a view of literature denies the cherished notion of "coverage," the assumption that there exists some ideal and minimal listing of works which a student must read or pretend to have read in order to say that he has "done" literature. And with this idea goes the curricular theory that requires one or two quick laps about the "field" before you pitch your tent on some high, dry specialty. And a final implication: if literature is in no sense an aggregate of works, a curriculum could do without a course in Shakespeare, or the eighteenth century, or American literature. This is not to say that the relevant material of any one of those courses should not be included in the curriculum under some other rubric.

Another negation: the order of literature is neither adequately nor efficiently conceptualized as a chronology. Lest the literary historians bolt, we admit that literature is produced in time: Wordsworth did follow Pope and wasn't very happy with him, and he did engage himself in some more or less revolutionary activities in France. But to design a curriculum in English upon these discrete facts and ultimately upon almost exclusively historical structures, as is most often the case, is equivalent to investigating chickens by eating hardboiled eggs. The comparison is not intended to denigrate the activities of intellectual history, the psychology of art, or the sociological studies of literary fashions and tastes; the intent is simply to put first things first, to make certain that these matters are at the periphery and that the criticism of literature is at the center of the curriculum.

A third negative decision: literature is not simply a list of great works or any other sub-class derived from an evaluative criterion. Nothing in this statement contradicts our sense of the worth of literature or its central position among the humanities. Nor does the statement ignore the obvious fact that a curriculum, by virtue of being a selection, necessarily implies an initial pragmatic evaluation of its object of study. What we want to avoid is a curricular structure fashioned after the tastes of a specific group or individual, for somewhere in the cellarage of such a structure we hear the ghostly cry: "I don't know much about literature but I know what I like." Commitment is important, and I would not make any curriculum an exercise in being dispassionate about the mediocre. On the other hand, received notions of the touchstones of our subject too often shift attention away from many of the works of literature that have been relegated to secondary positions by taste critics, yet these works just as often deserve a primary position in a curriculum because of the ways in which they efficiently demonstrate the orders of literature. Such a demonstration may dispel the student's cynical but natural feeling that he has been watching his instructor "shine in the high aesthetic line," or worse, that whatever literature he has read is little more than an elegant ossuary for the relics of moral philosophy, and that the criticism he has tasted is little more than a kind of brine for the pickled "beauties" of the language.

So much for negations. When T. S. Eliot trained his fine mind upon the problem of defining a cat, he wrote: "So first, your memory I'll jog, / And say: A CAT IS NOT A DOG." We will take this as our text, for we want something like that for literature at the beginning of our curriculum. We want at some early point in our discussions to be able to say to our students what literature is by distinguishing it from what it is not, to point out first that although it shares a larger class with discursive prose, it differs from it. Almost any definition will do for a start: anything from the linguist's idea of a literary text as one in which the "coding" is of more interest than the "message" to the critic's notion of the autonomous and "virtual" nature of a literary structure. Each of these points toward a distinction we would build on: that distinction between discourse and literature which rests on the shared assumptions of the reader and author about the semantic direction of the verbal utterance. Such definitions open up possibilities for making apparent to the student the ways in which a poem or a novel suggests a unique meaning system, a set of rules by which objects can exist and events occur, a system which is in effect a language in little fashioned out of the semantic and syntactic systems of a larger language. For our curriculum this implies a first-year course in the forms of discourse, including literature treated with the methods of the formalist critics. A covert secondary purpose of such a course is, admittedly, training in critical skills.

More than this, we want a definition which would not only stress the uniqueness of a literary work but would leave open the ways in which we can affirm the similarities among the variety of orders of literature. We could begin with an analogy: discourse is to literature as a statement (that is, one more or less subject to verification) is to a performative utterance (e.g., I promise, I christen thee, I take this woman to be my wife, etc.). Like the performative utterance, literature is not subject to verification or to truth conditions in the same way that a statement is; it does not report an event, it is an event. And although, like the performative utterance, each literary event is unique, these literary "performatives" depend upon conventions and shared expectations.[2] The notion of conventions and shared expectations leads to our assumption of an expanding series of orders, within literature and beyond it, orders which account for the complex and unspoken covenants between authors and readers. We assume, first, with Northrop Frye, "a total coherence" in our discipline and an order in literature which is the primary object of what we have called synoptic criticism. This is the first sanction for our study and it implies a second-year course in the typology of generic narratives and their thematic elements.

But just as each poem is an order or a meaning system within the larger orders of literature, so literature itself is one of many orders within the larger order of human culture. Here we have the second sanction for the study of literature and the second context for our discipline, a context which we share with other disciplines and within which ours must draw upon the content and theory of others. To those whom we have unceremoniously excluded so far from our curriculum—the literary historians, the aestheticians, the psychoanalytical critics —we here offer an invitation to return. With our own house in order, we can properly entertain them at advanced levels in the curriculum, where an informed and respectful dialectic among disciplines is possible. This is the final sanction for our study: all these orders are finally orders of the human mind.

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[2]See J. L. Austin's essay "Performative Utterances" in *Philosophical Papers* (London, 1961).

And with this sanction we may offer the vitality and the total relevance of literature to the other concerns of man as a partial remedy for that "fatal disconnection of subjects" which Whitehead saw as the original error of the modern curriculum. The best that he could find to say of the whole educational curriculum was that it was like a "table of contents which a deity might run over in his mind while he was thinking of creating a world, and had not yet determined how to put it together."[3] The metaphors of literature have been putting things together for some time and they may be of some use to Whitehead's deity.

At a conference on style a few years ago, I. A. Richards noted that a definition is always a "definition *for some purpose*. . . . It's a means for further work."[4] A definition of literature (the object of our study) is simply a means to the further work of the one thing we teach, criticism. Put another way, whatever literature is or is not as a thing in itself, our concern is with literature as a phenomenon, with its "subjective" constitution. Thus we think of criticism as a kind of phenomenology, a neutral science directed at the description of essences, with little or no interest in causality or evaluation. The ontological status of literature takes its shape, in part, from the mode in which it is perceived, and that mode is, again, criticism.

What has been said, negatively, about the nature of literature has its origin in a conception of criticism: criticism is not simply the description of all literature nor the record of the more or less fortuitous occurrences of literary works in history. The etymology of the word notwithstanding, criticism—if it is to get on about its business—must be dissociated from the prescriptive and judicial habits of the mind. Normative criticism has an undying appeal and the line between description and prescription is a contested boundary; nevertheless, to concentrate more fully on our true object, we must decline on theoretical grounds the invitation to impressionism or redundancy, and on practical grounds the invitation to teach ourselves as a subject rather than criticism.

The idea of a literary work as a closed meaning system, as a unique entity in some ultimate sense, is inferred from a conception of criticism in terms of formalist description and analysis. Beyond the early sequence of courses in which the primary emphasis is upon the textual analysis of literary works as discrete phenomena, the curriculum should become progressively more "theoretical" in two senses: first, it should substantiate and modify its own initial theory; and second, the consideration of the orders of literature and the varieties of specific orientations within courses, in which the analogical activities of the mind are exercised in synoptic criticism, should realize the more general aim of "theoretical thinking." That aim, as Cassirer has said, is "primarily to deliver the contents . . . of experience from the isolation in which they originally occur. It causes these contents to transcend their narrow limits, combines them with others, compares them, and concatenates them in a definite order, in an all-inclusive context."[5]

These two critical modes, the formalist and the synoptic, addressed to the unit and the universe of literary phenomena, may finally themselves be synthesized in a unifying discipline of criticism. A candidate for this high office, I suggest, is stylistic criticism. Two hunches lead me to back this dark horse. First, contemporary stylistics depends for much of its methodology upon linguistics, and it has derived from that science a good measure

[3] *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York, 1929), pp. 10-11.

[4] *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (New York, 1960), p. 102.

[5] *Language and Myth*, tr. Suzanne K. Langer (New York, 1946), p. 32.

of its rigor, simplicity, and elegance. (Linguistics, incidentally, can no longer be treated as a precocious child; teachers will ignore it at their peril, the very real peril of knowing less about the fundamental structure of the language than their incoming freshmen—or at least those from Westport, Connecticut. Linguistics has an assured place in the English curriculum by virtue of its worth in the formal analysis of the sound and metrical systems in poetry. Beyond its own intrinsic value, linguistics offers us a preliminary discipline with possibilities for transfer of both a substantive and theoretical nature. That transfer will probably come through stylistics.)

My second hunch rests on an analogy, some fact, and a good deal of hope. The analogy is between the structures of language and the structures of literature. Stylistics is concerned with isolating the linguistic evidence of a pattern of decisions a writer makes in the winding route from his initial confrontation with the language to the completion of the artifact that demonstrates his individual style. That route from language to style involves a series of related decisions which, for the convenience of analysis, may be thought of as having a sequential nature derived from a perhaps artificial hierarchy of stylistic features: out of semantic units and syntactic patterns the writer fashions an idiosyncratic diction and syntax; that diction and syntax produce a rhythm and fuse into tropes; these in turn produce attitude (the writer's tone, stance, and role); and all in concert produce a set of elements from which we draw our evidence for a description of style. The analogy we would explore will find its proof, if at all, far in the future. It presupposes the extension and refinement of synoptic criticism along this line of speculation: that there may exist in literature thematic and structural patterns analogous to the semantic and syntactic ones of language and that their relationships and operations may be described in a grammar of literature. If this is the case, it is altogether possible that the route from language to style which is now being mapped out in "microstylistics" may be paralleled or extended through the "macrostylistic" studies of a route from the total order of literature (its "diction" of characters, settings, imagery and its "syntax" of generic narratives) to a concatenation of elements more extensive than those that make up a style and for which Leslie Fiedler's term *signature* is perhaps appropriate.[6] The analogy points to many areas of speculation. Some are immediately apparent: the relationship between attitude in discursive prose and the *ethos* of a literary work and—to reverse the analogy—the relationship between the narrative of a literary work and the "plot" of an essay. Other speculative areas are perhaps too wild for exploration now; but it is conceivable that if the syntax of our language follows rules of transformation from a finite series of basic sentence patterns, the infinite variety of literary structures may be derived by analogous transformational rules from a few basic literary patterns.

I will abandon the analogy there, defenseless as it is, with only the suggestion of a line of development criticism may take in the future, one which the curriculum should admit and perhaps foster in its structure. Stylistics, conceived of in this larger sense as a semiotics of literature, could become the unifying science of the whole English curriculum. Its analytic functions are essentially linguistic; it includes rhetoric; it may well combine the work of the formalist and the synoptic critic; it directs literary history back towards its proper concern, literature; and at last in the interpretation of style, this discipline draws together a variety of others to explore what White-

[6] "Archetype and Signature: A Study of the Relationship between Biography and Poetry," *Sewanee Review*, 60 (1952), pp. 262 ff.

head meant when he said that "Style is the ultimate morality of the mind."

The general remarks to be made about the curriculum will be brief, not because the topic lacks complexity and importance, but because we have until recently taken an attitude of lordly indifference towards curricular theory, assuming somehow that a concern with methods was unprofessional. Someday, someone—preferably from a liberal arts college—should eat the word "educationist."

A curriculum is a means and necessarily lies somewhere between the conceptual order of any theory and the practical exigencies of teaching. Still, some general principles, roughly similar to those we have followed in the description of our object and its study, may function as curricular postulates.

Here again the nature, the structure, and the cultural interrelationships of criticism should suggest a conceptual framework for the curriculum. If criticism is our subject, it follows that the teaching of literature—in the sense that one teaches a student how to create literature—is extracurricular to the study of English. The creative and performing arts, for their sake as well, should assume an autonomous though related position to ours. (Consistency might well demand that we draw similar implications for the teaching of discursive writing; we would if we were certain that it wouldn't put us out of work.)

Secondly, if criticism is our subject, we must sooner or later become metacritics, at least to the extent that we are able to isolate and articulate the theoretical and methodological constituents of criticism that may be transferred in the learning process. Whatever personal or professional concern we may have for the "facts" of literature and for a continuing exploration of the data of criticism, these after all are ephemeral, if not in themselves, certainly within the minds of our students. The lasting values of our discipline do not lie in its content but in its structure and processes.

The curriculum therefore should have a rhythm which would accent not the discrete facts of criticism but its structure and the principles upon which that structure has its footing. Whatever figure serves as a metaphor for this construct—a line, a spiral, or whatever—any unit of the curriculum must reinforce, through incremental repetition, what has been learned and must generously imply what is to be learned and, more importantly, something of how it is to be learned. And through some sequential and conceptual organization of the principles of criticism, the curriculum should state or at least imply its correlations with the other major constructs of human culture.

Finally, we must allow for error. No curriculum, and certainly not one which takes its form from anything as protean as criticism, can be thought of as static and absolute. The dynamics of the field demand something on the order of Marshall McLuhan's idea of a "reflexive" curriculum.[7] At some final level and certainly within the graduate schools, the curriculum itself should become the subject of the curriculum. Somewhere a self-correcting mechanism must permit the experiment, the modification, and the reorientation of the curriculum that contemporary criticism foreshadows.

I do not mean to end on a prophecy, but I want to make explicit an assumption that lies behind much of our searching for analogies in linguistics and models in mathematics, even perhaps behind our insistence upon the phrase "the order of literature." Criticism, whether we like it or not, is moving into the spectrum of the sciences—and the sentimental outcries we have all heard are partial proof that this is so. In this event, literature will

[7]See chapter 3 of *New Insights and the Curriculum: Yearbook 1963 of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*, ed. Alexander Frazier (Washington, 1963).

neither gain nor lose; but we who learn more *about* literature in order to learn more *of* ourselves stand to lose a great deal if we do not follow the new directions of criticism towards a new conception of the English curriculum.

Part II

ROBERT D. FOULKE

THE THEORETICAL RELATIONSHIPS between literature, criticism, and the curriculum which have just been described remind me of Don Quixote's windmill. The curriculum, like the academic year, keeps going around and around no matter how much it may creak and groan. Northrop Frye's important distinction between knowledge *of* literature and knowledge *about* literature is surely applicable here. As critics and teachers, one of our roles is that of Don Quixote himself; we would like to transform the sails or vanes of critical method into the imaginative wind we are trying so hard to catch. Our other role is that of not-so-rustic realists in the academic world who, like Sancho Panza, must first be concerned with windmills as windmills and must find out whether they are of any use in pumping a little water of knowledge. Pedagogically, our first role is about as hard to grasp as the pious hope so frequently found in the concluding paragraph of freshman essays. It is ultimately reducible to a classroom osmosis by which the teacher's assimilation of literature flows into the more viscous fluids of student minds. I have no doubt that such osmotic transfer does take place in certain highly charged classrooms, and that it is a good thing when it does happen, but when used as the basis for a curriculum it inevitably leads to the Mark Hopkins theory of learning—to the cult of personality and to the anarchy which make our activity so suspect as a discipline of thought. Thus the first postulate of curriculum building is one which sets the limits of the endeavor: A curriculum is designed to communicate knowledge *about* literature.

The second postulate of curriculum building is one which Mr. Smith has already examined in detail: A curriculum should be derived from some theory of the relationships between criticism and literature. A corollary is immediately suggested: Ideally, the structure of the curriculum would *duplicate* the structure of criticism. Such identity is conceivable only if we avoid a polemical definition of criticism—that is, a definition in terms of contending "schools" or warring tribes, each possessed by its own vision of truth incarnate. In this century we have seen that segments of the total body of literature (like so-called "metaphysical" poetry) or other disciplines (like psychology) can never generate criticism which will quell the Swiftian battle of little magazines and produce a viable United Nations of criticism. Professional worry about this endless debate has become tiresome, but it will continue to plague us until the need for systematic and comprehensive criticism is generally acknowledged.

The struggle for such wholeness and order is beyond the scope of this paper and our temerity, but I am going to attempt a hypothetical demonstration of the way in which the structures of criticism and curriculum might be organically related. For this purpose, tentative models of each activity must be set up. The model for criticism derives from a

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third basic postulate: The individual literary work is the significant atom of the literary universe which can be isolated for critical attention. This postulate is not a restatement of "pure" new criticism or a denial of the claims of "extrinsic" criticism, as René Wellek and Austin Warren use that term.[1] What it does establish is the centrality of the work itself, rather than its author or its locus in time and space, as the primary unit from which valid critical approaches can be derived. In this context, *approach* is a better word than *method* because it suggests the incompleteness and the almost mathematical complementarity of the various ways of knowing something about the literary work. In another context, *method* is the better word because it describes and limits the operations which we perform when we take an *approach*. Critics find approaches and invent methods.

We assume that criticism has four useful approaches corresponding to relationships into which the literary work enters: First, the work may be studied in relation to itself; second, in relation to the total order of literature; third, in relation to the outside world which it somehow incorporates; and fourth, in relation to the "audience" which it addresses. If we use the words "centripetal" and "centrifugal" in Northrop Frye's sense,[2] the first two approaches are centripetal because they include all the ways of studying the work within an order of words, from the minimal sound or motif which can be isolated to the most encyclopedic verbal structure imaginable; similarly, the last two approaches are centrifugal because they examine the ways in which a work necessarily relates to nonverbal entities, in one case to the human beings who perceive the work and in the other to everything nonverbal which can be perceived. By a rough analogy which is more convenient than exact, these four approaches also correspond to more systematically organized disciplines which analyze language. The analogy is worth pursuing because it suggests a geography of criticism.

The first relationship, that of the literary work to itself, circumscribes the territory of *formalistic* criticism, an approach comparable to structural linguistics. Just as total description of syntax bounds one, total description of form bounds the other. Formalistic criticism has its phonology in the study of prosody, its morphology in the study of literary symbols, and its syntax in the study of total structure. One kind of formalistic analysis adopts the methods as well as the approach of linguistics. There are important correlations between meaning structure and meaning reference in both language and literature, but the formalistic critic is primarily concerned with internal relationships such as repetition, juxtaposition, ambiguity, and the metaphorical "texture."

A second approach, which we have called *synoptic* criticism, needs to be discriminated from literary history. As a study of the relationship between a literary work and the body of literature as a whole, synoptic criticism is like literary history; both attempt to correlate a large number of discrete works. Here the similarity ends. The literary historian uses extrinsic concepts of biography, period, and culture to explain the circumstances of the work's production, affiliate it with movements, and discover its past and future links of source and influence. In contrast, synoptic criticism is methodologically related to transformational grammar in our basic analogy

[1] See René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York, 1956), pp. 61-62.

[2] See Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 73-75. Frye uses these metaphors to distinguish discursive prose from literature, but they are also appropriate for the description of critical approaches if we remember that centrifugal criticism must finally reverse itself and become centripetal to make meaningful statements about the work of literature.

between criticism and the study of language. Just as the transformational grammarian studies many sentences to derive some general laws about possible variations of core sentences, the synoptic critic studies a wide sampling of literary works, usually scattered in time, place, and language, for the purpose of discovering generic narrative patterns which inform the whole body of literature.

Because structural linguistics and transformational grammar are amenable to precise and sophisticated techniques, their successes have been more convincing than those yielded by the semantic analysis of language, which is analogous to the third kind of literary criticism—usually described by the adjectives "historical," "sociological," "psychological," "philosophical," and so forth. The relationship studied in this approach is that of the literary work to the world which it imitates or represents, just as many words ultimately stand for or symbolize something exterior to them which is nonverbal. The border between this critical territory and formalism has been the Maginot Line of twentieth-century criticism, largely, I think, because of a confusion in nomenclature as well as in practice. Too easy identification of the historian using literary documents with the literary critic seeking allusions in history misconstrues the whole relationship between the work and the world which it imitates. To avoid such confusion between *output* (what the work has to say discursively about the world) and *input* (what kind of world the work imitates), we refer to this approach as *analogical* criticism.

The fourth approach, which will complete the model for criticism, is comparable to one kind of rhetorical analysis of language and can be called *generic* criticism after the genres which it discovers. Just as classical rhetoric is a study of the use of language, generic criticism is a study of the "use" or presentation of works of literature. Both rhetoric and generic criticism are partly centrifugal in their reference, but a study of either which stopped at defining relationships between speaker and listener (or writer and reader) would be sterile indeed. This aspect of generic criticism is again an output, if I may return to machine-age terminology for a moment; the input is the effect of external presentation on the form of the work itself, and this is surely the more significant half of the relationship for critical study. In analogical criticism, only input is admissable because output scatters itself among various other disciplines; in generic criticism, the two directions of movement can never be separated because they are reciprocal. Moreover, since output is the relation of the work to us and to our students, it has implications for pedagogy as well.

This model of criticism—imperfect as it may be—is now complete, but it can have no utility whatsoever in generating a curriculum unless it corresponds to similar models for the literary object and for the process of learning. The key word throughout this paper is *relationship*. At the risk of annoying you once more with a series of oversimplifications to demonstrate the possibility of the tripartite relationships between literature, criticism, and curriculum envisioned by our third postulate, I shall make one more foray into the speculative world of analogy. The nature of the literary object itself can be described in sets of terms which correspond roughly to the geography of criticism.

Let us look briefly at some ways of projecting a description of the literary work. One uses the notion of "elements" from classical physics; it is the basis of Aristotle's *Poetics* and Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. Aristotle uses six elements, Mr. Frye uses four, and I shall use three for the sake of simplicity in constructing the model. The first element is a character's place in the internal "world" of the literary work, corre-

sponding to the abstract relation of part to whole, and the concrete relation of man to nature and society. The second element is the kind of world imitated by imagery and symbol, corresponding to the abstract relation of actual to possible, and the concrete relation of an undesirable experienced world to a desirable imagined world; the third element is the pattern of action or plot, corresponding to the abstract relationships of cyclical movement, directional movement, and stasis, and to the concrete relationships of the life cycle, success or failure, and stagnation. Also, by translating character to the notion of "persona" and plot to the notion of poetic "argument," we can see that the model fits thematic as well as narrative literature. Yet another way of projecting these relationships is mathematical. If we start with geometric dimensions instead of elements, the literary work looks like a cube. By using a system of opposites (polar differentiation) to distinguish the character with total power from one with no power, a world totally desirable from one totally undesirable, and an action which is static from one which is dynamic, we can set the limits within which any literary work must operate, and we can show how a position within one polarity is a function of the others. This mathematical projection also suggests that *continuous variability* is a quality of the literary universe —that we do better to describe the "neighborhood" of the literary work than to classify it as a discrete type. Recognition of such continuous variability is important because it lets us explain such anomalous forms as tragicomedy, closet drama, and ironic quest without questioning their legitimacy.

In a very important way, then, constructing a model of the literary work implies an international geography of criticism. When we set national boundaries we are merely indicating centers of power, or saying that the internal character/environment complex is especially relevant to formalistic studies, that the internal meaning of the world imitated by imagery is at the center of analogical criticism, and that formulaic, repeated patterns of action are the special interest of synoptic criticism. Thus the model for literature seems to demand every approach to criticism except the generic; and when we look at generic criticism more closely, what has been called input is a set of conventions which applies to all dimensions of the model. Output, the listener or reader, is quite properly not in the model because it is not *in* the work, but exists as a fourth dimension to it.

Spatial metaphors have served as a means of suggesting models for literature and criticism, but curricula exist in time. The essentially timeless orders of literature and criticism must be translated into a sequence, and that leads to the necessity of our fourth and final postulate: The order of the curriculum must be derived from a reasonably adequate theory of the learning process. In other words, we must cross that very wide street separating departments of English from schools of education. Since Mr. Smith and I pretend to no competence in educational psychology, we shall simply list some operating principles without attempting to justify them theoretically. One of these principles is the idea of "nonspecific transfer," described by Jerome Bruner as the process of "learning initially not a skill but a general idea, which can then be used as a basis for recognizing subsequent problems as special cases of the idea originally mastered."[3] Another principle might be called the macrocosm-microcosm sequence or, put another way, the primacy of fundamental ideas in a discipline. Again I quote from Bruner: "In order for a person to be able to recognize the applicability or inapplicability of an idea to a new situation and to

[3]Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), p. 17.

broaden his learning thereby, he must have clearly in mind the general nature of the phenomenon with which he is dealing."[4] Another principle which we use is what psychologists describe as the reinforcement of learning through repetition. Unfortunately, I cannot find a figure as dignified as the "spiral" to represent our model curriculum; it keeps looking like a cow's udder. Two other more teleological principles—interdisciplinary study and the "articulation" which we have been hearing about so often at recent conferences—are tangential to the model.

If up to this point my role has been Don Quixote's more than Sancho Panza's, I have ample warrant from Cervantes, who also believed that there are two integrally related ways of looking at windmills. What follows is a more specific outline of *one* curriculum which can be generated from the possible correlations between literature, criticism, and learning suggested in this paper. Quite obviously, it is not the only one. For convenience, its stages are associated with the traditional four-year program, but the sequence is more important than any specific placement. At each stage there is a particularly appropriate critical approach, an associated scholarly discipline, and recommended study in cognate disciplines.

In the freshman year, formalistic criticism is central; it should be embodied in a single half-year course not too dissimilar from courses now offered in many curricula. This proposal may seem to undermine the principle of fundamental ideas, and it is certainly a conservative response to the general panic about freshman English. Yet formalistic criticism as we have conceived it is no less engaged with fundamental ideas than other approaches because its object of study happens to be the molecule rather than the literary cosmos. There are two pragmatic advantages to close study of texts at this stage in the curriculum. First, analysis of structure within the individual literary work is manageable because it does not presuppose a range of reading wider than we have any right to expect. Second, the growing precision of formalistic criticism is a very effective antibody to the germ of sloppy reading commonly carried by even the best of our freshmen. Teachers, like the cannibals on board Marlow's steamboat, must exercise restraint to keep this course from becoming a parody of criticism, but we may remind ourselves that no curriculum is responsible for darkness within. The sequence in such a course should move from the least to the most difficult literary structures. When we have the results of more research on the reading of literature, it may be possible to determine such a sequence more accurately, but even now there is no justification for a condescending syllabus; given world enough and time, *Ulysses* can be read in the last four weeks of this course. To be effective, however, the course does depend upon the student's knowledge *about* language, so the associated disciplines must be linguistics and rhetoric. Ideally these disciplines should be studied intensively for their own sakes (rather than as aids to composition) *before* the literature course.

In the sophomore year synoptic criticism is central. It should be taught in a full-year course which examines the literary work as a part of the organon of literature, drawing readings from a wide range of periods, places, and genres without any implication of "historical" order. Since the objective of this course is isolation of generic narratives and their thematic correlatives from the whole body of Western literature, the first half-year might be devoted to romance and irony, the second half to comedy and tragedy. The principle of transfer is paramount here because this course would serve as the prerequisite for all further study of literature. For example,

[4] P. 18.

if we were to include works by a medieval poet, Coleridge, Conrad, and Faulkner in the first half of such a course, we might find ourselves juxtaposing *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with *Old Man* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* with *Heart of Darkness*. The example is intentionally extreme but not absurd. If we are interested in the typology of narrative structures, such pairings of romantic and ironic journeys are far more effective pedagogically than anything we could concoct within the boundaries of genre, period, or the distinction between English and American literature. Experience with a trial version of this course has shown that it can only be effective for students who have learned to read closely, that it needs a full year for development, and that it can be successful as a means of giving students a comprehensive notion of what literature is about. The scholarly discipline associated with this course is the study of religious and secular myth, which cannot be assumed as a part of the student's equipment until "articulation" with secondary schools is more than a hypothesis. In the interim, courses in the Bible, classical mythology, and anthropology are available at many colleges and should be recommended to any student majoring in literature.

Courses in the junior year should grow out of analogical and generic criticism. They would serve both as a core of study for the major in English and as electives for the non-major. The analogical courses would study the most fundamental relationships between the contained world of the work and its exterior analogue; the generic courses would study the reciprocity between the conventions of presentation and the reader or listener. Only courses far less specialized than those customarily offered can fulfill these purposes—what we now do is like requiring a course in original sin with the Calvinistic hope that the curriculum may later elect a few students to redemption.

The full-year courses projected by analogical criticism would be four in number; in accordance with our principle of incremental repetition, they might appropriately be called Romance, Tragedy, Comedy, and Irony. Here the emphasis is not on narrative or thematic pattern as it was in the sophomore course, but on the ways in which those patterns —whether cyclical, directional, or static —depend upon a mode of perceiving the world within literature. That such modes ranging from the almost totally idealized to the almost totally mimetic or naturalistic persist throughout the body of literature is evident, although differences in the raw material which they use may obscure their essential unity. Study of these recurrent projections—of the ways in which seemingly disparate literary works have a common focus on the screen of imagination—is the objective of these courses. Such study may be the best way to examine the relationship between literature and life. Let me illustrate how such a course works. The syllabus for Romance might include *Beowulf*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *The Faerie Queene*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Comus*, *The History of Rasselas*, "The Eve of St. Agnes," *The Deerslayer*, *Idylls of the King*, the early lyrics of Yeats, and *Henderson the Rain King*. This list can be expanded indefinitely to suit the pedagogical and literary taste of the teacher, but as long as the course is structured to demonstrate the literary affinities between the idealized worlds of Beowulf and Natty Bumppo, or Rasselas and Henderson, it cannot degenerate into anarchy or over-specialization. In this kind of course it matters little whether or not the works are read in historical order as long as history does not become the basis for organization. The intellectual advantages of the "analogue" courses will be apparent to anyone who has tried to make meaningful connections between George Eliot and William Morris or Shaw and Virginia Woolf in the usual period

course. The scholarly discipline associated with analogical criticism is literary history, to be sure, and the student should be given some idea of its applicability, just as he should be encouraged to take cognate courses in such departments as history and philosophy which will teach him the methods and limits of those disciplines.

The second main line of courses for the junior year derives from generic criticism; it too can be divided into four full-year courses under the rubrics of drama, narrative poetry (including epic), fiction, and lyric poetry. I hesitate to name them at all, for the theory of genre is one of the most muddled parts of criticism. Do we classify genres by a narrative to thematic polarity (which would give us drama, fiction, epic, lyric), by the degree to which sound and sight are important (drama, lyric, epic, fiction), or by the degree to which the "performance" is direct or indirect (drama, epic, fiction, lyric)? It is impossible to answer such basic questions with confidence, partly because no system of generic distinction can be an absolute classification without making works seem to be what they are not. The mathematical idea of continuous variability is a particularly useful analogy here; it reminds us that the spoken voice is a convention in epic long after it has stopped whispering, that the narrator in fiction implies a voice, that some poetic dramas are not dramatic performances, that some lyric poems need to be read aloud and that others suffer by it. The various courses in genre, then, must be thought of as color ranges within the spectrum of possible relationships between work and audience. Thus historical ordering of works within these courses—the word "development" is a cliché of their catalogue descriptions—is inappropriate for a very simple reason: Historicism within a genre course can be replaced by analytic systems. It is more profitable to juxtapose *Tristram Shandy* with *Ulysses* than with *Tom Jones* if we are interested in determining the limits of allusion or interior monologue or progression by motif as structural devices of fiction. The scholarly discipline associated with generic criticism is a "sociology" of literary form, the study of ways in which presentation interacts with form. And because generic considerations ultimately relate to the way in which any art object is perceived, the appropriate cognate would be a course in aesthetics.

In the senior year, more specialized applications of synoptic and formalistic criticism return. The analogues and genres studied in the junior year rather arbitrarily divorce conventions for the sake of pedagogy, yet no literary critic can issue such decrees of annulment because the habitual union of interior worlds with kinds of presentation is more than a marriage of convenience. The epic, the pastoral, the elegiac tradition, and the comedy of manners are examples of such unified conventions, and it seems to us that any one of these could merit a semester's attention from seniors majoring in English. At this stage of the curriculum, Parkinson's Laws may work their will without undue harm; any reasonable number of courses based on fused conventions might be invented by faculties with a sense of proportion. The other approach of the senior year is formalistic criticism; it might generate two courses which combine theory and practice. One would be a course in the kind of stylistic analysis which has been discussed by Mr. Smith; the other would be a course in the theory of symbolism coordinating psychological theories of perception with the semantic analysis of language. Both courses might well draw upon advanced studies in linguistics and rhetoric. Finally, the capstone of the whole system is a course or seminar in literary criticism which would explore in detail the more important correlations between theory and practice. Faculty members engaged in such a venture might find themselves

well equipped to remodel the curriculum, to make it truly self-correcting rather than self-perpetuating.

If we stand back for a moment to look at this curriculum as a whole, we can see that it opens out upon the increasingly specialized study of graduate school, where by implication further synoptic courses such as medieval romance, Renaissance tragedy, naturalism in fiction, or symbolism in poetry might be offered. These could be complemented by formalistic rather than biographical studies of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, or Joyce, on the principle that "Lycidas," *Paradise Lost*, *Samson Agonistes*, and *Areopagitica* are more significantly connected by a style than a blind man. Articulation in the other direction is more difficult to chart, but secondary curricula should pay some attention to simplified forms of all four critical approaches.

It is customary to close papers with a grand peroration, or an embracing metaphor, but neither would suggest the practical difficulties of putting this curriculum into effect. A few questions may suggest these difficulties. What will the seventeenth-century man do? How can we keep *The Waste Land* from appearing in seven different courses? Will graduate schools accept applicants trained so unconventionally? For our proposed curriculum is *radical* in both senses of that word: It does undermine the establishment, and it does uncover a root or basis for deriving an academic structure. If we are to do anything more than tinker with curricula, we need such radical hypotheses and we need to test them.

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